

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP:

Urban Design Committee

DATE, TIME AND

PLACE OF MEETING:

Wednesday, January 4, 2006, 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2nd Floor, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Mike Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Third World Oforah, Dennis Scheer, Scott Sullivan and Kim Todd; (Gordon Scholz absent).

Others: Terri Dolezal (Alltel); Ken Weber (Weber Services, Inc.); Tari Hendrickson Sweeney (YWCA); Steve Kathol and Andrea Bopp (The Schemmer Associates); Dan Grasso and John Kay (Sinclair Hille Architects); Josh Simpson (The Clark Enersen Partners); Karen Amen (Olsson Assoc.); Dave Bomberger, Stacey Roach and Jerry Shorney (Parks & Recreation); Ernie Castillo and Jeff Cole (Urban Development Department); Marvin Krout, Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:

Regular Urban Design Committee Meeting

Chair Dennis Scheer called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Approval of meeting notes of November 2, 2005

Eckert moved approval of the November 2, 2005 meeting minutes, seconded by Kissel. Motion carried 3-0. Eckert, Kissel and Scheer voting 'yes'; Sullivan abstaining; Oforah, Scholz and Todd absent.

Oforah and Todd arrived following the previous vote.

Cheney Booster Water Storage Reservoir (Karen Amen, Olsson Associates)

Karen Amen stated the Lincoln Water System needs to build a water tower in southeast Lincoln along Highway 2. It will be approximately 80-100 feet tall. The final location has not been determined. They are in the process of determining the site and developing potential criteria. They are trying to work their way toward the southeast service area. There is already a 10 million gallon water tower in the area. One consideration would be to put this elevated tower in that location. They are trying to stay along the high ridge. Another location is along Highway 2 and the planned future beltway.

Amen then presented some design options. The option that is preferred is the composite hydro-pillar. This option will also allow for interior office space. She stated that they also considered having an art contest with local schools for art work on the tower. At this point, however, they are uncertain as to

whether or not to include words and/or art on the tower.

Oforah asked if there are currently other water towers of this height. Amen stated that currently Lincoln has both underground and above ground storage, but no water tower of this height and visibility. This tower would allow for gravity flow. Oforah asked if they have visited this type of tower to determine the feasibility of the office space. Amen stated that the office space is quite nice and presented drawings of the potential work space.

Kissel added that it is important to control the view corridor.

Oforah suggested that a profile be done to show what the tower would like in its setting.

Eckert asked if the Water Department has determined which site they prefer. Amen stated that a matrix of criteria has been done, but they have not yet been weighted.

The Committee agreed that the tower should not be an entry feature to the City of Lincoln, and that the preferred location is the farthest from the residential development. In terms of architecture, Scheer commented that he believes we should treat the structure as what it is. Oforah stated that if the structure is designed as office space the facade could be created as a building with windows, and suggested a reddish sunset color be used as a brick design. Todd noted that she feels the color should be more neutral than white. Zimmer suggested a sand color. Scheer stated that the tower should be screened at eye level and believes that scale is important. Todd added that the screening should be nestled in the site.

Wireless communication tower, Van Dorn Park

Ken Weber distributed site plans and elevation drawings for the wireless communication tower being proposed at 10th and Van Dorn Streets. Alltel is in the process of trying to fill a gap in their coverage in this area. The location they are proposing is on the extreme west edge of the park. The tower would be 150 feet in height, which makes it possible for future co-location. He presented drawings of the tower in its setting from the east and south, which would be the views most impacted. Weber stated that they intend to have a neighborhood meeting to seek input on the plan.

Todd moved approval of the location and height of the tower, seconded by Kissel. Motion carried 6-0. Eckert, Kissel, Oforah, Sullivan, Todd and Scheer voting 'yes'; Scholz absent.

Harris Overpass Rebuild (Schemmer Associates/Sinclair Hille Architects)

Andrea Bopp began by stating that the Harris Overpass was completed in 1955 and carries O Street over 28 railroad tracks from 3rd Street to 9th Street. The existing bridge is 1,870 feet long and has 28 sets of 3-column tiers. It is structurally deficient and qualifies for federal bridge replacement funding. The design process includes a 16 member advisory group. The project began in late 2004. The first year of the project focused on the preliminary design and whether or not the bridge will remain closed or open during construction. The final design stage will take about a year. Bid letting is scheduled to begin in early 2007, and construction will begin in late 2007 and will take about a year.

Design issues include construction phasing, historic preservation, future plans of the Downtown Master Plan, parking beneath the bridge and aesthetics. Public participation has included drop-in centers, two

public meetings, business and stakeholder interviews, an advisory group, and meetings with neighborhood centers.

The Mayor made the phasing decision last September to close the bridge during construction. The reason is that it will take one year as opposed to two and will result in a cost reduction of about \$5 million.

John Kay stated that federal aid projects must undergo Section 106 review to be compliant with the National Historic Preservation Act. This involves working with the Department of Roads, the City of Lincoln, the Federal Highway Administration and the State Historic Preservation Office. It is a requirement to define an area of potential effect, which was identified from N to P Streets and from 1st to 10th Street.

Steve Kathol discussed the cross-sections of the existing and new structure. The existing bridge has two lanes in each direction. There is a center barrier and a relatively narrow sidewalk on the north side. The separation distance between the Haymarket buildings on the north side and the bridge deck is approximately 24 feet. The proposed cross section is two lanes in each direction with a 4 foot raised median. The sidewalk is much wider. The new bridge is 4 feet wider than the existing bridge. The existing turn lane is inadequate to store enough vehicles wanting to turn southbound onto 9th Street. The existing lanes include 1 thru lane, 1 shared lane and 1 right-only turn lane.

Kathol noted that there are two design concepts currently being studied by the design team. Concept A would maintain the existing lane configuration, but extend the right-turn lane to 550 feet long. Concept B would introduce an additional turn lane, so the lane configuration would have 2 thru lanes and 2 right-turn only lanes. The advantage of this option is that it improves traffic flow, but it has more of an impact to the buildings.

Parking configuration concepts for underneath the bridge include head-to-head parking with drive lanes on the outside or end-to-end parking with the drive lane in the center and sidewalks and parking against the building. The goal is to have no net loss in parking spaces. Pier placement will control the parking layout options. Sullivan asked what the advantages are to the head-to-head parking in the center of the right-of-way. Kathol stated that the advantage is it allows for more spaces. Sullivan stated that he prefers the more traditional approach of parking along the curbs. Todd stated that the curbside option is safer for pedestrians.

Dan Grasso presented the aesthetic options. He noted that there currently is not a lot of support for a signature span, mainly due to the cost and because of the length of the bridge. There is a lot of support for above deck piers, ornamental lighting and an upgraded guard rail on the pedestrian side. They are viewing this bridge as a civic structure in downtown Lincoln. They are looking at a rusticated pier with rough stone, ornamental lighting and some custom guardrails on the pedestrian side. The goal is to enhance the pedestrian side of the bridge where it will have the most impact. Possibly at each landing, they will have an anchor at each end. The other big problem they are addressing is the pigeons under the bridge. They are currently investigating ways to eliminate any type of ledge or place for the pigeons to perch.

Oforah suggested possibly using some of the "First Nation" design elements that are used on the dome of the Capitol (on the wall along the proposed walkway).

Scheer noted that he feels a signature span is not necessary. He likes the approach they are taking with the palette of materials and trying to match Haymarket. He added that keeping downtown and the Haymarket pedestrian friendly is very important and sometimes the vehicle needs to come second.

Todd departed following this discussion.

South Street right-of-way enhancements (Ernie Castillo, Urban Development)

Scheer stated that this agenda item will be postponed until the next Committee meeting.

Star Art project/Temporary use of public property

Tari Hendrickson Sweeney informed the Committee of the public art project called Star Art. There are a total of 69 works of art. Installation is planned for late January, and the temporary displays will be removed before the end of April 2006. The pieces will be auctioned on April 28. In addition to locations on City parks and rights-of-way, many pieces will be displayed on private property in both indoor and outdoor settings. The art will be joined by art projects from students of Lincoln Public Schools.

Sullivan asked about the relatively brief duration of the display. Hendrickson Sweeney stated that the project included a wide variety of art media, of varying durability and size, and therefore it was organized for January to April installation.

Hendrickson Sweeney presented illustrations of the models of the works selected for display. The Committee was informed that Parks & Recreation and Public Works are reviewing the public sites to identify any public safety concerns.

Sullivan moved approval of the project, seconded by Kissel. Motion carried 5-0. Eckert, Kissel, Oforah, Sullivan and Scheer voting 'yes'; Scholz and Todd absent.

Scheer adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.